

Proclamation 6351 of October 8, 1991

Mental Illness Awareness Week, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Once shrouded in mystery—and spoken of only in sad, hushed tones—mental illness is becoming more widely understood. Thanks to dramatic advances in basic biomedical research and in the behavioral sciences, we have been able to achieve significant improvements in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of emotional and mental disorders. Scientific progress has also helped to alleviate the stigma associated with mental illness, as more and more Americans learn about its origins and effects. Nevertheless, because millions of Americans suffer from some kind of mental disorder, we pause this month to reflect on this major public health problem and to renew our commitment to better mental health.

Mental illness can affect people of any age, race, or walk of life. For example, many elderly Americans are vulnerable to depression and to other illnesses that can threaten their independence and security. Many youngsters who are affected by phobias or other mental disorders continue to suffer when their symptoms are mistaken for passing behavioral problems. Left untreated, mental illness not only leads to lost productivity in school and in the workplace but also damages its victims' self-esteem and personal relationships.

Recognizing the high costs of mental illness to individuals and to the Nation, scientists, physicians, and other concerned parties throughout the Federal Government and the private sector are working hard to achieve further progress in brain research. Just 2 years ago, as an expression of our support for their efforts, I signed into law House Joint Resolution 174, which called for the observance of the 1990s as the "Decade of the Brain." This resolution underscored the importance of continuing brain research and signalled our firm commitment to better mental health in the United States.

In recognition of the importance of educating the public about mental illness and the needs of those who suffer from it, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 156 has designated the week beginning October 6, 1991, as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of October 6 through October 12, 1991, as Mental Illness Awareness Week. I invite all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH